

Message Text

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51 15

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 CIAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 PC-10 AID-20 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSC-10

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 SAM-01 OPR-02 SY-10

A-01 OC-06 CCO-00 SCA-01 SCCT-02 USSS-00 NIC-01 DRC-01

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FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2498

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

INFO SECDEF IMMEDIATE

CINCUSNAVEUR IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR IMMEDIATE

DIRNSA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0104

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, ET

SUBJECT: MILITARY MUTINY

REF: ASMARA 102

1. SITUATION IN ASMARA AS OF 1000 LOCAL THIS DATE IS CALM AND RELATIVELY UNCHANGED FROM YESTERDAY. CONGEN IS NOT RPT NOT AWARE OF ANY INCIDENTS INVOLVING EITHER AMERICANS, ETHIOPIANS, OR OTHER NATIONALITIES. IEG MILITARY OFFICERS APPARENTLY CONTINUE UNDER HOUSE ARREST. CONGEN HAS BEEN INFORMED AIRCRAFT FROM ADDIS ABABA IS EXPECTED THIS MORNING WITH CHIEF OF STAFF LT. GENERAL ASSEFA AYENE AND HIM AIDE DC LT. GENERAL ASSEFA DIMESSIE. IF TRUE, THIS AUGERS WELL. FORMER IS PERSONALLY KNOWN TO ME AS ONE OF MOST THOUGHTFUL, CONFIDENTIAL

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INTELLIGENT, AND COMPETENT MILITARY EXECUTIVES I HAVE MET.

LATTER ALSO IS PERSONALLY KNOWN TO ME AS OUTSTANDINGLY CAPABLE EXECUTIVE WHO HAS INSTANT ACCESS TO AND COMPLETE CONFIDENCE OF EMPEROR. MOREOVER, BOTH ARE BELIEVED TO BE GENERALLY RESPECTED BY TROOPS HERE.

2. IF NEGOTIATORS FROM ADDIS DO ARRIVE TODAY, OR EVEN IF THEY DO NOT, LEADERS OF MUTINY WILL BE CONFRONTED WITH NEW PSYCHOLOGICAL SITUATION. PVIHI PASSAGE OF 24 TO 36 HOURS FOLLOWING THEIR DECISIONS AND ACTIONS YESTERDAY AND NIGHT BEFORE, THEY INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY PROBABLY ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY AWARE OF THE ENORMITY OF THEIR ACTIONS AND OF THE RISKS THAT SUCH ACTIONS IMPLY IN TERMS OF THEIR INDIVIDUAL WELFARE. THUS, I WOULD GUESS THAT LEADERS OF MUTINY PROBABLY WOULD BE WILLING TO DISCUSS NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE TWO ASSEFAS. LEADERS ALREADY HAVE ACHIEVED OBJECTIVE OF BRINGING TO ATTENTION OF EMPEROR AND OF IEG THEIR COMPLAINTS AND THEIR INTERESTS, AND IEG NOW IS FULLY AWARE OF THESE. IF IEG REFLECTS REASONABLE AND UNDERSTANDING ATTITUDE, COMPROMISE SOLUTION PROBABLY CAN BE OBTAINED WITHIN NEXT 12 TO 24 HOURS. HOWEVER, IF LEADERS OF MUTINY CONCLUDE THAT IEG IS NOT REASONABLE AND UNDERSTANDING, OR IF THEY CONCLUDE THAT THEY MAY BE SHOT, HUNG, OR IMPRISONED, THEY PROBABLY MAY CONSIDER MOVING FROM POSITION OF BLOODLESS MANEUVER TO ONE OF ACTIVE VIOLENCE. SOME INDICATION OF POSSIBILITIES IN THESE REGARDS SHOULD IMANIFEST ITSELF TODAY.

3. INTERESTING RUMOR HEARD BY CONGEN THIS MORNING IS THAT RADM ISKANDER DESTA WAS AT MASSAWA LATE YESTERDAY OR EARLY THIS MORNING, THAT IEN ENLISTED PERSONNEL WITH ARMY TOOK NAVAL BASE (CONGEN IS SEEKING CONFIRMATION) AND THAT DESTA TOOK OFF IN PATROL BOAT TO ESCAPE APPREHENSION BY HIS TROOPS. RUMOR ALSO IS THAT DESTA TELEPHONED ITALIAN INDUSTRIALIST BARATTOLO TO ASK THAT PRIVATE AIRCRAFT OWNED BY LATTER BE DESPATCHED THIS MORNING TO PICK DESTA UP ON ONE OF DAHLAC ISLANDS OFF MASSAWA. I TELEPHONED BARATTOLO THIS MORNING AND HE DENIED ANY SUCH COMMUNICATION FROM DESTA. DESTA VISITED ME AT MY HOME FOR THREE HOUR INFORMAL DISCUSSION ON FEB 24 AT WHICH TIME HE SAID HE PLANNED RETURN TO ADDIS FEB 25 AND TO RETURN TO ASMARA ABOUT
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MARCH 1. IN FACE OF EVENTS AT ASMARA YESTERDAY, IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT DESTA MAY HAVE FLOWN FROM ADDIS TO MASSAWA. WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION ADDIS MAY BE ABLE TO OBTAIN THIS REGARD. SINCE DESTA IS NOT ONLY RADM COMMANDING NAVY BUT ALSO PALACE FAVORITE AND GRANDSON OF EMPEROR, IT IS POSSIBLY MUTINEERS MIGHT HAVE SPECIAL INTEREST IN HIM. CONGEN IS SEEKING FURTHER INFO FROM MASSAWA SOURCES.

4. SINCE DICTATING ABOVE, I HAVE BEEN INFORMED IEN NAVY
BASE IN MASSAWA IS IN CONTROL OF BOTH ARNC AND NAVY
DISSIDENTS. I ALSO HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT SENIOR MAAG
REP AT MASSAWA, LTCDR VOLLMER, AND TWO U.S. NAVY MAAG CHIEFS
ARE ON BASE AND POSSIBLY NOT FREE TO DEPART. I AM CHECKING THIS AND
IF NECESSARY WILL SEEK TO NEGOTIATE THEIR FREEDOM TO LEAVE BASE AREA.
RABIDA

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